



Harbinger

March and April 2011 VOL 25 NO 2

It's time to put nature back into childhood. There are countless books and theories on the subject of nature versus nurture in raising a child, but now there are studies and books that clearly show that *nurturing* your child in *nature* is important in developing the whole child. So much so that Governor Jay Nixon established the *Children In Nature Challenge* in February 2010 "to challenge Missouri communities to take action to enhance children's education about nature, and to increase children's opportunities to personally experience nature and the outdoors."

When I think about my childhood, I remember countless hours spent outside. I have fond memories of climbing trees, catching fireflies, and collecting anything I could get my hands on including rocks, leaves, and insects. I remember riding my bicycle aimlessly through miles of country roads only stopping briefly at crossroads to determine which direction to turn. And I remember dreamtime, creating worlds and imagining all kinds of wonderful stories about the plants and animals that surrounded me. I wandered through fields of wildflowers and marveled at the vast array of insects. My siblings and I played games that we created and enjoyed wild play and freedom in the great outdoors. Maybe your childhood was similar.

While these descriptions may sound idyllic and impossible to recreate in today's generation of children, all it takes is a small piece of ground and the freedom to explore. My most meaningful

outdoor experiences took place in a small backyard in Wichita, Kansas, and not in some grandiose setting. My wildflowers would be considered weeds to most—dandelions and clover mostly—and my network of country roads was nothing more than the ground, cracked and dried by a hot Kansas sun, surrounding the tufts of grass in an unmanicured lawn.

Children benefit from spending time outdoors. Connecting with nature helps them physically and mentally and teaches them realistic lessons of life and death, of cycles

and seasons, and of the joy of making discoveries and solving mysteries. These firsthand experiences will undoubtedly make children better future stewards of the natural resources on which all life depends. And more than anything, spending time outdoors is fun for the entire family and the cost is absolutely free.

If you'd like to know more about the importance of connecting children to nature or would like to learn about additional opportunities to get your family involved in outdoor activities including participating in the Governor's challenge, we have the answers and the inspiration. Join us on Tuesday, April 5, from 7-9pm for the film premiere of *Mother Nature's Child: Growing Outdoors in the Media Age*. This 58-minute film explores nature's powerful role in children's health and development through the experiences of toddlers, children, and adolescents. During a reception following the film, visit with staff from different agencies and organizations to discover local opportunities to connect the children in your life to the outdoors. Visit mothernaturesmovie.com to view the movie trailer and childreninnature.mo.gov to learn more about the Governor's challenge.

Parents, grandparents, youth leaders, and teachers, we invite you to take the *Children in Nature Challenge* and to take the lead in nurturing the children in your life in nature.

~Linda Chorice



The View From The Bridge

It has been exactly a year since the hours of operation for the nature center building and area were decreased to align with the budget and staffing constraints the Missouri Department of Conservation has been facing. Fortunately, we have some good news. Beginning March 1, our summer hours are in effect which means three changes. First, the area will remain open until 8pm daily for hiking the trails and, secondly, the building will open on Sunday afternoons from 12 noon to 5pm. New this year, the gate and area will also open on Sunday mornings at 8am and on most holidays. (The building and area will remain closed on New Year's Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.)

While the economy hasn't improved dramatically, we're responding to you, our visitors, who have made many requests to have the area open on Sunday mornings. For your convenience, the outdoor restrooms will also open at 8am on Sunday. The building will open on Sundays from 12 noon until 5pm. Our summer hours are in effect from March 1 through October 31. Here are the summer hours:

MARCH 1 THROUGH OCTOBER 31

NATURE CENTER BUILDING

Tuesday-Saturday 8am-5pm

Sunday 12 noon-5pm

Closed on Monday

AREA INCLUDING TRAILS

Sunday-Saturday 8am-8pm

VISITOR USE SURVEY REMINDER

Don't forget that we are conducting a year-long visitor use survey as visitors exit the area during 7 one-hour randomly selected times a month. The survey only takes 2-3 minutes to complete and will enable us to better help you and others discover nature. Please help us by participating in the survey.

We hope you'll take every possible advantage of the extended summer hours to discover nature with your friends and family at your Springfield Conservation Nature Center.

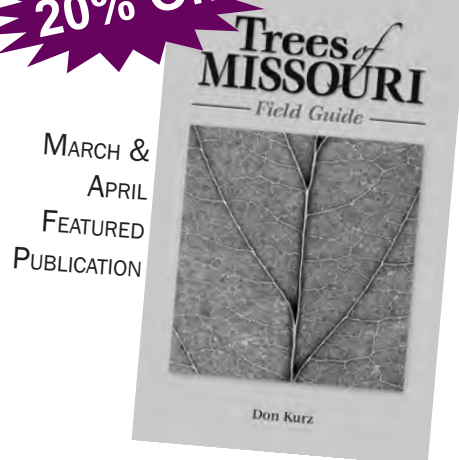

Linda F. Chorice
Nature Center Manager

The Springfield Conservation Nature Center is located in southeast Springfield just west of US-65 off the James River Freeway (US-60). From March 1 to October 31, the area and trails are open daily 8am to 8pm. The building is closed Monday and open 8am to 5pm Tuesday-Saturday and 12 noon-5pm Sunday. The area is closed to pets, bicycles, roller blades, hunting, fishing, collecting, and alcoholic beverages. No fees are charged.

Phone: 417/888-4237 Fax: 417/888-4241 <MissouriConservation.org/2360>

The Nature Nook Gift Shop

20% Off



Discounted price: \$6 plus tax

Heritage card discount does not apply.

Trees of Missouri Field Guide

Based on Don Kurz's original *Trees of Missouri* publication, this concise, easy-to-carry field guide will help you identify trees in the yard, neighborhood, or natural area.

Thank You

The nature center would like to thank Mike Skinner for the donation of several books, Larry Daniel for several eagle photographs, and Deah Chisholm, De Spice, and John Richerson for donating several natural objects.

Temporary Display

March

Mingo Swamp Flora & Fauna
Photography Contest—2010

April

Accent Pencil Drawings
by Rodney Schertz

Visit <accentpencildrawings.com>
for additional information

Ask The Naturalist

Seasonal changes spark many questions. In this section, we answer some common questions about natural events.

How can I get rid of a hawk at my feeder and keep it from eating birds?

The hawk, like other birds, is coming to your feeder for food; hawks are natural predators. Wild songbirds and hawks will go where the food source is present. Try taking your feeders down for one or two weeks and then putting them up again. Hopefully, the hawk will have found food elsewhere.

Why don't I see robins in the winter?

As winter approaches, robins leave the territory where they nest and raise their young. They gather in flocks to find food sources, such as fruits and berries, to help them survive or they migrate south. Flocks of robins can be seen in the winter searching for berries in groves of red cedar trees.

Why are there no birds at my bird feeder?

There are many reasons for seeing fewer birds at bird feeders. Slight changes in habitat, such as removing a tree, could cause birds to shift their feeding pattern. When natural food is abundant elsewhere, birds may leave feeders for a short time. Check to see that seed isn't molded, spoiled, or underdeveloped due to insect infestation. Make sure bird feeders are kept clean. Predators can sometimes cause birds to leave bird feeders temporarily.

Chipping In . . . Volunteer Naturalist Joyce Kastler

Fast Facts:

Volunteer Class of 2008

Hours Donated: 400 hours

Occupation: Retired CPA and prior business owner

Education: B.S. in accounting from East Texas State University

Nature Center Activities: working the front desk, patrolling trails, and assisting with programs

I volunteer because: I have always enjoyed the nature center, have visited often over the years, and now have time to give back. I find it rewarding to volunteer and getting the next generation excited about conserving nature.

The most fulfilling part of working as a Volunteer Naturalist is: interacting with visitors on the trails, during programs, and at the desk. I enjoy being able to share the enthusiasm when new discoveries are made by visitors during programs and while on the trails.

One thing most people don't know about me is: that my husband and I were RVers for five years and worked at national parks across the country.

When I was young, natural experiences that influenced me were: picnicking with my family and all the activities that I was involved with as a girl scout.

I am inspired by: the diversity of nature across the country and with the seasonal changes in the different states.

One place where I have always wanted to go is: Canada and travel by train to spend several days visiting different parts of the country.

My favorite volunteer memories occurred: during a guided night hike at the Halloween Happening event and seeing kids get so excited.

My favorite natural place to visit in Missouri is: Roaring River State Park to go hiking.

When I am not volunteering, you can find me: still here hiking the trails. I also enjoy reading and hiking other areas.

Beginning in March, you will see a few new faces at the nature center as the 19th class of Volunteer Naturalists graduate and begin their official duties. Please take a moment to meet these talented Volunteer Naturalists on your next visit and to thank them for chipping in.

Trevor Cunningham
Krystal Drysdale
Kevin Eutsler
Steven Eutsler
Coty Goodwin

Judy Jenkins
Kristin Longman
Jim Pitts
Andrew Saunders
Diana Schneider
Phil Schneider

Myra Scroggs
Jim Shaddy
Pat Stritzel
Paul Taylor
Lisa Zellers

417 Magazine

The nature center was voted "Best Place To Get In Touch With Nature."

Volunteer Milestones

Tim Warden	750 Hours	Jan Miller	400 Hours
Joyce Kastler	400 Hours	Elicia Ligon.....	300 Hours



Naturescaping Symposium

and Native Plant Sale

Saturday, April 2, 9am–4pm

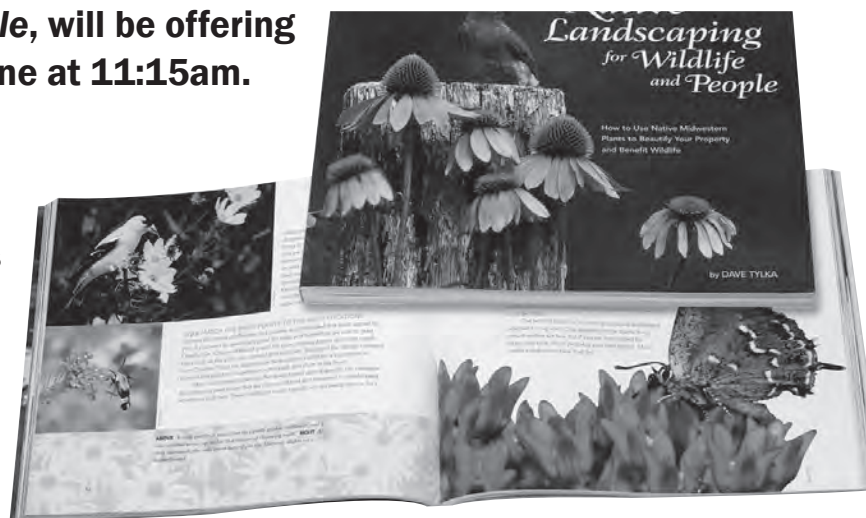
Native Plant Sale begins at 9am
at the
Springfield Conservation Nature Center



Naturescaping emphasizes landscaping with native plant species providing urban habitat for a diversity of wildlife and offering alternatives to the traditional water- and chemical-dependent manicured lawn.

Guest speaker Dave Tylka, author of *Native Landscaping for Wildlife And People*, will be offering two programs—one at 10am and one at 11:15am.

As a widely recognized educator, biologist, nature author, and photographer, he brings together a wealth of information on native species and ideas that can inspire any home gardener or landscaper. Tylka will have a book sale and be available for autographing after the programs.



Exhibitors Include

Master Gardeners of Southwest Missouri
Missouri Wildflower Nursery
Friends of the Garden
Greater Ozarks Audubon Society
Show-Me Yards and Neighborhoods, City of Springfield

The Springfield Conservation Nature Center is located in southeast Springfield just west of US-65 off the James River Freeway (US-60). Call the nature center at 417/888-4237 if you have questions.



March Events

Springfield Conservation Nature Center

Call the nature center at 417/888-4237 on or after **March 1** to register for March programs requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call to cancel so that someone on the waiting list may attend.

3 Discover Nature Families Turkey Hunting For Beginners

THURSDAY, 6:30–8PM



Discover Nature Families programs are designed to help adults and children explore nature and master outdoor skills together.

Spring turkey season is almost here. Parents, grandparents, and adult mentors, bring your youngster(s) to practice your turkey calling, to learn about spring turkey hunting season, and to take home some tips on how to be safe and successful in the woods this spring. Ages 6 and above with an adult mentor. Registration begins February 22.

5 The Art Of Woodcarving

SATURDAY, 10–11AM

Try your hand at woodcarving with members of the Southern Missouri Woodcarving Artists as they teach carving techniques and show how to transform wood into works of art. Ages 12–adult. Registration begins February 22.

Woodcarving Demonstration

SATURDAY, 10AM–4PM

Visit with members of the Southern Missouri Woodcarving Artists as they share information with the “wood-be” carver, demonstrate carving techniques, show works in progress, and sell some of their art pieces.

8 Badge Bonanza

TUESDAY, 6:30–8PM

Attention all scouting and youth organizations! Here’s a program to help you earn nature badges. The focus will be Missouri animals and their characteristics, food chains, habitats, and more. Activities are also open to the public. All ages. Registration required.

9 Story Time With Ms. Ladybug

WEDNESDAY, 11–11:30AM

Join Volunteer Naturalist Linda Brown as she reads a nature story and shares activities with your 2–6 year olds. Please, no organized groups.

11 Hunter Education

FRIDAY, 6–9PM AND SATURDAY, 8AM–5PM

This 10-hour course is required for anyone born after January 1, 1967, who wants to hunt with firearms in Missouri. The course is continued Saturday, 8am to 5pm. You must pass a written test to be certified. Students under 15 years old must be accompanied by an adult and show proof of age. Bring a heritage card or any previous Missouri hunting or fishing permit if you have any of these. Ages 11–adult. Register online at <MissouriConservation.org>.

17 Parents As Teachers Story Time

THURSDAY, 9:30, 10:30, OR 11:30AM

Parent Educators from Parents As Teachers will offer a *Nature At Its Best* story time. Enjoy stories, activities, and finger plays designed for children from birth to age five. Each session is forty-five minutes in length. No registration required.

17 Missouri Black Bears

THURSDAY 7–8PM

Encountering a black bear in Missouri has become more common in recent years. These large mammals, once gone from the state, have created lots of questions and interest with their return. Conservation Department wildlife staff Tim Russell, Brad Jump, and Kevin Hedgpeth share the latest research results along with information about how to avoid unpleasant encounters with black bears. Ages 10–adult. Registration required.

18 Not Just Morels: Missouri’s Wild Spring Mushrooms

FRIDAY, 7–8PM

Mushrooms are a source of great fascination and lots of questions for many outdoor enthusiasts. Now you can learn from an expert how to find, identify, and prepare wild mushrooms for your nature enjoyment and culinary delight. Maxine Stone, past president of the Missouri Mycological Society and author of the newly published and long-anticipated *Missouri’s Wild Mushrooms—A Guide To Hunting, Identifying, and Cooking the State’s Most Common Mushrooms*, returns to share her expertise during this indoor presentation. The book includes detailed descriptions of 102 species and easy visual aids for identification along with some delicious recipes. A book sale and autograph session by the author will follow the presentation. Ages 8–adult. Registration required.

19 For Adults Only And Hiking Club: Orienteering

SATURDAY, 8AM–5PM

Learn the basics of using a compass and topographic maps during the indoor portion of this program. After lunch, we’ll test your newfound orienteering skills at Busiek State Forest and Wildlife Area. Bring a sack lunch and water and wear comfortable hiking shoes. Hike is approximately five miles and rated moderate to difficult. Ages 18–adult. Registration required.

Babes In The Woods Celebrates Spring

SATURDAY, 11–11:45AM

Spring is in the air as we go on a guided nature stroll to rejuvenate you and your favorite 0–2 year old. Bring a stroller. Registration required.

24 Ozark Trail 350 Miles And Growing

THURSDAY, 6:30–8PM

The Ozark Trail, which now exceeds 350 miles, provides a backcountry experience through the Missouri Ozarks. Learn about this near-wilderness experience that offers exciting trips lasting from a day to three weeks from Steve Coates, officer of the Ozark Trail Association. He will provide an overview of the existing trail and plans for expansion. Brochures, maps, and trip planning expertise will be available in break-out sessions following the presentation. Ages 7–adult. Registration required.

Attention Hikers and Trekkers: Because of program popularity and to accommodate newcomers to hiking programs, you are invited to attend a social after tonight’s program from 8–9pm. You’ll have the opportunity to network with other hikers and outdoor enthusiasts. Share your knowledge about places to hike, the experiences you have had, and personal contact information with other hikers if you so desire. Drinks and snacks provided.

25 Crappie Fishing For Beginners

FRIDAY, 7–8PM

Crappie fishing is a favorite pastime for many anglers in the Ozarks. Whether you fish during the winter or wait for them to spawn in the spring, crappie can be caught throughout the year. Join us as we explore when, where, and how to catch one of the Ozarks favorite panfish. Ages 12–adult. Registration required.

26 Conservation TEEN Club Hercules Glade Wilderness

SATURDAY, 9AM–4PM

Have you got cabin fever? Are you tired of being cooped up inside the house? Join us for a hike through the Hercules Glade Wilderness. Bring a day pack and rain gear. Wear comfortable hiking shoes and layers of clothing to stay warm. Lunch and transportation will be provided. Ages 12–17. Registration required.

31 Conservation Kids’ Club Predators—They’re Part Of The Picture

THURSDAY, 6:30–7:45PM

Predators—they don’t get much respect. Discover the facts about this underrated, interesting, and diverse group of animals. You will be surprised by what you learn. Ages 7–12. Please, no younger siblings and only one adult per group of kids. Registration required.

Little Acorns

Little Acorns programs are for children 3–6 years and are 45-minutes in length. Please limit **Little Acorns** programs to one per month. Registration required.

Salamander Slide

Meet the salamander family. We’ll investigate some of their special features and find out why salamanders aren’t lizards.

SATURDAY, MARCH 5, 11AM ~~ WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16, 11AM OR 1:30PM

Spring Peepers

It’s time for some frog-frolicking fun exploring the life cycle and world of the tiny peepers.

FRIDAY, MARCH 18, 11AM OR 1:30PM ~~ SATURDAY, MARCH 19, 1:30PM

Beautiful Blooms

Everyone loves flowers and spring is a great time to see them. Join us for a short hike as we learn what special jobs flowers do. We’ll make a “flowery” craft to take home.

FRIDAY, MARCH 25, 11AM OR 1:30PM



April Events

Springfield Conservation Nature Center

Call the nature center at 417/888-4237 on or after **April 1** to register for April programs requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call to cancel so that someone on the waiting list may attend.

2 Naturescaping Symposium And Native Plant Sale

SATURDAY, 9AM–4PM

Naturescaping emphasizes landscaping with native plant species providing urban habitat for a diversity of wildlife and offering alternatives to the traditional water- and chemical-dependent manicured lawn. Guest speaker Dave Tylka, author of *Native Landscaping for Wildlife And People*, will be offering two programs—one at 10am and one at 11:15am. As a widely recognized educator, biologist, nature author, and photographer, he brings together a wealth of information on native species and ideas that can inspire any home gardener or landscaper. Tylka will have a book sale and be available for autographing after the programs. The day will also include exhibitors and a plant sale. No registration required.

3 Primitive Skills Series Useful Plant Hike

SUNDAY, 1–3PM

Plants have always been important to humans. Volunteer Specialist Don Brink will explore the folklore and modern uses of several Missouri plants. Ages 15–adult. *Registration begins March 15.*

5 Mother Nature's Child: Growing Outdoors In The Media Age Film Premiere And Reception

TUESDAY, 7–9PM

From filmmaker Camilla Rockwell and co-director Wendy Conquest comes a new documentary film—*Mother Nature's Child: Growing Outdoors in the Media Age*—which explores nature's powerful role in children's health and development through the experiences of toddlers, children, and adolescents. This important film asks the questions: Why do children need unstructured time outside? What is the place of risk-taking in healthy child development? How can city kids connect with nature? What does it mean to educate the “whole” child? This 58-minute film will inspire you to think about the answers to these questions and the importance of nature in your own development. Parents, grandparents, youth leaders, and teachers, learn about local opportunities to get your children involved in the outdoors during the reception that follows the film. This film premiere ties in with Governor Jay Nixon's *Children In Nature Challenge*, a program designed to recognize communities and families who create opportunities for their children to get outside and discover nature firsthand. Visit <mothereaturesmovie.com> to view the movie trailer and <childreninnature.mo.gov> to learn more about the Governor's challenge. Ages 12–adult. **Registration begins March 15.**

Newsletter Online

Thanks to everyone who has registered to receive the newsletter online. If you'd like to start receiving your newsletter through the web, sign up at <MissouriConservation.org/2360>.

8 Hunter Education

FRIDAY, 6–9PM AND SATURDAY, 8AM–5PM

This 10-hour course is required for anyone born after January 1, 1967, who wants to hunt with firearms in Missouri. The course is continued Saturday, 8am to 5pm. You must pass a written test to be certified. Students under 15 years old must be accompanied by an adult and show proof of age. Bring a heritage card or any previous Missouri hunting or fishing permit if you have any of these. Ages 11–adult. Register online at <MissouriConservation.org>.

9 Hiking Club

SATURDAY, 8AM–5PM

Enjoy an early spring hike through the Mark Twain National Forest at Noblett Lake with Volunteer Naturalist Mike Mihalik. Meet at the nature center and carpool. Bring a sack lunch and plenty of water and wear comfortable hiking shoes. Hike is five miles and of moderate difficulty. Ages 18–adult. Registration required.

13 Story Time With Ms. Ladybug

WEDNESDAY, 11–11:30AM

Join Volunteer Naturalist Joyce Tolliver as she reads a nature story and shares activities with your 2–6 year olds. Please, no organized groups.

Discover Nature Families Natural Communities Hike

WEDNESDAY, 1–3PM

DISCOVER nature FAMILIES Discover Nature Families programs are designed to help adults and children explore nature and master outdoor skills together. Parents, grandparents, and adult mentors, bring your youngster(s) to explore the different natural communities of the nature center on this two-mile hike. Find out why some plants grow only in certain ecosystems, how wildlife differs from one habitat to another, and learn from Volunteer Naturalist Dan Liles how geology affects the landscape. Ages 6 and above with an adult mentor. Registration required.

14 Babes In The Woods Celebrates Earth Day

THURSDAY, 11–11:45AM

Take a stroll for Earth Day. Enjoy nature with the younger generation, children 0–2, on this special stroller walk to celebrate our planet. Registration required.

15 Conservation Crew Garlic Mustard Pull

FRIDAY, 1–4PM

Do you have what it takes to cut the mustard? Qualifications include the ability to identify garlic mustard, a willingness to ruthlessly pull this invasive plant by the roots, a sense of competitiveness, and a strong desire to rid the area of this exotic plant. After a quick identification lesson at the nature center, we'll divide into teams to spread out at the nature center and on nearby lands to conquer garlic mustard. A little friendly competition will be added to this unique Earth Day recognition. Ages 12–adult. Registration required.

16 Ozark Whittlers & Woodcarvers

SATURDAY, 10AM–4PM

Stop by to see members of the Ozark Whittlers & Woodcarvers transform wood into treasures.

Babes In The Woods Celebrates Earth Day

SATURDAY, 11–11:45AM

Take a stroll for Earth Day. Enjoy nature with the younger generation, children 0–2, on this special stroller walk to celebrate our planet. Registration required.

23 Conservation TEEN Club Fishing And Hatchery Tour

SATURDAY, 9AM–4PM

Springtime in the Ozarks means fishing! Come and have a great time chasing lunkers at Chesapeake Fish Hatchery. Fishing will be catch-and-release and participants 16 years of age and older must have a valid fishing permit. Lunch and transportation will be provided. Dress for the weather. Ages 12–17. Registration required.

28 Conservation Kids' Club Celebrate Earth Day

THURSDAY, 6:30–7:45PM

City of Springfield Materials Recovery Coordinator Barbara Lucks makes a special appearance to teach you how to be a better steward of our earth. Learn about making good environmental choices, recycling, and what kids can do to make our earth a little more “green.” Enjoy a fun, interactive evening as you compete in a “green” shopping spree. Ages 7–12. Please, no younger siblings and only one adult per group of kids. Registration required.

Little Acorns

Little Acorns programs are for children 3–6 years and are 45-minutes in length. Please limit **Little Acorns** programs to one per month. Registration required.

Egg-squisite Eggs

Bring your little ones and learn egg-sactly how and why animals begin their lives in these wonderful little packages.

FRIDAY, APRIL 8, 11AM OR 1:30PM

SATURDAY, APRIL 9, 11AM

Tots And Toads

Missouri toads are colorful, harmless, vocal, and valuable. We'll have fun learning about these cool creatures. Ages 3–6. Registration required.

TUESDAY, APRIL 12, 11AM OR 1:30PM

SATURDAY, APRIL 16, 11AM

Snappers, Sliders, And Stinkpots

Turtles come in many shapes and sizes. They also have some pretty silly names. Learn the names of common local turtles and discover where and how they live.

THURSDAY, APRIL 14, 11AM OR 1:30PM